

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /091 W

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P R 181409Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9979

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION NATO

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16351

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF

SUBJECT: AUTHORITATIVE PRAVDA ARTICLE ON LABANON CRITICIZES SYRIA

REF: MOSCOW 14152

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AUTHORITATIVE OCT 18 PRAVDA "OBSERVER"
ARTICLE ON LEBANON SHARPLY CRITICIZES CURRENT SYRIAN MILITARY
OFFENSIVE, WITHOUT HOWEVER REPEATING IMPLICIT CALL FOR
SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL MADE IN LAST "OBSERVER" ARTICLE IN PRAVDA
SEPT 8 (REFTEL). MAIN TASK, SAYS "OBSERVER", IS CEASE FIRE.
ONLY WAY TO PEACE IS POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, BUT, "OBSERVER"
WARNS, POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD NOT BECOME A SCREEN
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BEHIND WHICH CONTINUED BLOWS COULD BE DEALT THE PALESTINIANS

AND THE LEFTIST FORCES. END SUMMARY.

2. ASSUME DEPT HAS FBIS TEXT. EMBASSY NOTES THAT OCT 18 "OBSERVER" PIECE IS MUCH SHORTER, LESS DETAILED, THAN LAST "OBSERVER" ITEM ON SEPT 8. MUCH OF SUBTLETY OF LANGUAGE IS GONE. END RESULT, ESPECIALLY IF ONE SKIPS OVER THE COMPULSORY POLEMICS ON IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM, IS A HARD HITTING CRITICISM OF THE CURRENT SYRIAN MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND THE "NATIONAL-PARTIOTIC FORCES" COUPLED WITH AN IMPLICIT CHARGE OF SYRIAN POLITICAL DUPLICITY IN LAUNCHING THIS OFFENSIVE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY ENGAGING IN APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AT CHTOURA WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SARKIS AND THE PLO. "RYSIAN TROOPS ARE SMASHING EFFORTS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT," SAYS "OBSERVER," "AND BLOODSHED IS INTENSIFIED."

3. ODDLY ENOUGH, THIS SHARPENED ATTACK ON SYRIAN POLICY IS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY EVEN AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO THE ISSUE OF SYRIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL. THIS MAY BE A MATTER OF FIRST THINGS FIRST, I.E., ACHIEVEMENT OF A CEASE FIRE, OR IT MAY REPRESENT A TACIT ADMISSION BY MOSCOW THAT IT RECOGNIZES THE FUTILITY OF URGING A SYRIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL AT A TIME OF SYRIAN TROOP ADVANCE.

4. THE EMPHASIS ON A CEASE FIRE IS CLEAR. IT IS PART OF THE VERY HEADLINE OF THE ARTICLE AND IT IS SAID STRAIGHT OUT IN THE ARTICLE'S FINAL PARAGRAPH. FOLLOWING THAT "OBSERVER" REPEATS MOSCOW'S PREVIOUS FORMULA THAT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS THE "ONLY WAY" TOWARD PEACE IN LEBANON, BUT, THIS TIME, HE ADDS THE IDEA THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON A POLITICAL SOLUTION SHOULD NOT BE TRANSFORMED INTO A SCREEN TO COVER CONTINUED BLOWS AGAINST THE PALENTINE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND THE LEFTIST FORCES.

5. THIS ARTICLE, LIKE PREVIOUS SOVIET STATEMENTS ON LEBANON, FAILS TO CARRY ANY SORT OF WARNING TO THE SYRIANS THAT MOSCOW INTENDS TO TAKE ANY ACTION TO ENCOURAGE EFFORTS TOWARD A CEASE FIRE AND POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS. UNLESS MOSCOW IS SAYING OR DOING SOMETHING TO THE SYRIANS ABOUT

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WHICH WE ARE UNINFORMED, THIS "OBSERVER" ARTICLE IS LIKELY TO BE COLD COMFORT TO THE PALESTINAINS.

6. PARENTHETICALLY, WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING ROUTINE CONSULTATIONS AT THE ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR LEVEL WITH Y.D. PYRLIN, DEP. CHIEF OF NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DEPT., MFA, FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. LAST WEEK WE WERE TOLD HE WAS "VERY BUSY" AND WOULD BE UNAVAILABLE FOR ONE MONTH.

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